

Nat'l Phase III Redefinition

ASPIRA® An Investment in Latino Youth®

Report

*to the
National Board of Directors
of the
ASPIRA Association, Inc.*

Submitted by:
Ronald Blackburn-Moreno
National Executive Director

January, 1997



PROGRESS REPORT

to the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

of the

ASPIRA Association

by

Ronald Blackburn-Moreno
National Executive Director

January, 1997

INTRODUCTION

This Report covers the activities of the National Office between August, 1996 and January, 1997. The last report to the Board of Directors was presented at the Board of Directors Annual Meeting in Washington in August, 1996.

I am extremely pleased to inform the National Board of Directors that this has been an extremely busy and productive five months for ASPIRA in each aspect of its operations; advocacy, programs, resource development, technical assistance, and finance.

The major accomplishments and activities of the National Office have included:

Reception in Honor of Dr. Antonia Pantoja

ASPIRA organized a reception on occasion of Dr. Pantoja's receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The reception was held in The White House and was attended by over 100 guests, including members of the National Board of Directors, Executive Directors, other distinguished Hispanic leaders such as the presidents of the National Council of La Raza and the National Puerto Rican Coalition among others. Dr. Donna Shalala, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services was among the speakers.

Public Policy

ASPIRA has been especially active in public policy over the past six months. Activities include:

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

One of the main accomplishments of this quarter was the leadership role played by ASPIRA in the development and national dissemination of the 1996 National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLEA) Policy Summary: **"A Hispanic Agenda: Creating and Renaissance of Community and Culture for All by the Year 2000."** Under ASPIRA, the Policy Summary was developed in collaboration with the 32 major national Hispanic organizations in the country and disseminated across the nation. Over 5,000 copies of the agenda were distributed. A Press Conference to release the agenda was held at the Capitol, which was covered by the national press, the Latin American Press and C-SPAN. In addition, I participated in C-SPAN's Washington Journal Program to discuss the agenda.

The NHLEA also released the document **"Congressional Support for Hispanic Issues in 1995-96: How Members of Congress Voted on Issues of Importance to Hispanics."** ASPIRA developed the study and the report, which has received wide attention nationally.

ASPIRA is also taking the lead through the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, in identifying and supporting candidates for nomination to positions within the Clinton administration. Chairing the NHLEA, the National Executive Director led a delegation of 14 CEOs of national Hispanic organizations to a historic meeting at The White House with Presidential staff, including the Hon. Robert Nash, Special Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Presidential Personnel the Honorable Henry Cisneros and the Chief of Staff of the Vice President, to discuss our agenda regarding increasing the numbers of Hispanics in appointed positions in the administration. Our goal is to ensure that at least 10% of appointees are Hispanic. The NHLEA, under ASPIRA's leadership will be releasing a Report Card on Presidential appointments in May, 1997. In the meantime, ASPIRA has submitted the names of several candidates and has been busy submitting letters of support for other Hispanic candidates for various positions.

Mobilization for Equity

Accomplishments included the development of the bilingual Advocacy training modules for the NCAS program for use with parents and students, and our participation in the NCAS annual strategic planning meeting in Chicago.

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

This year Congress will reauthorize the Higher Education Act of 1965, that includes the TRIO Programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search). ASPIRA has been working closely with several national organizations to make recommendations for improving the Act. High on ASPIRA's agenda is to protect the TRIO Programs. ASPIRA is highly dependent on this program. All the Associate offices

(except Connecticut) have a Talent Search grant and others (Puerto Rico) have Upward Bound grants.

ASPIRA is working with the NCEOA, the national TRIO organization (which all the Associates belong to), and is supporting their agenda on TRIO. On other issues, ASPIRA is working with the Hispanic Education Coalition and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to help shape the new law.

The National Office staff participated actively in several events surrounding the Inauguration of the President. The Chairperson of the Board, Ms. Raquel Ortiz and the National Executive Director attended the first Hispanic Inaugural Gala. The staff also attended several receptions and dinners, opening opportunities for developing new contacts.

Training at ETS

The National Office organized the Second National Training of Associates at Educational Testing Service, November 21 - 24, 1997. Over 45 participants from the Associate offices attended the four-day training.

Training was provided in three areas:

- Finance
- Program Evaluation
- Development

The training on Finance included:

- budgets;
- elements of cost allocation;
- statements of financial accounting standards 116, 117; and
- financial statements and effective accounting.

Ms. Candy Vidal, now full-time at the National Office (see below) was charged with organizing the training sessions. Representatives from Arthur Anderson, the National Office auditing firm, offered the session on the new accounting standards. A consultant from the firm RAFFA and Associates covered budgets in a full-day session.

Two full-day sessions on Program Evaluation were conducted to allow participants to attend other sessions (Fund-Raising). Mr. John Gargani, the National Office's evaluators for several programs offered one session, whereas the National Executive Director offered the second. The sessions covered the basics of Program Evaluation design and data collection and analysis. Two full-day sessions were held on Fund Raising. The first session focused on general fund-raising, which was conducted by Frank Elston, Director of Development at the University of Texas Health Center and NSFRE consultant. The second session during this day was dedicated to developing a project for each Associate. This session, which will be followed up over the next several months, was conducted by the National Office Development staff. The second session was a full-day training on proposal writing.

This session was conducted by the National Executive Director.

In addition to the training, there was the opportunity to have a meeting of the Council of Executive Directors, since all the Executive Directors were in attendance.

Programs

The main accomplishment in program development over these five months has been the extraordinary progress made in program integration and enhancement of program efficiency. The ASPIRA Public Policy Leadership Program and the ASPIRACorps (ASPIRA AmeriCorps) community service program have been fully integrated. We are also integrating the ASPIRA Mobilization for Equity Program (Ford Foundation grant -see below) into APPLP and APEX.

We have known for quite some time that there is a need for better integration of programs so that each program can draw on the strengths, experiences, materials and resources of others. Over the past year, we have moved decisively to enhance inter-program collaboration and integration.

- **Health Careers** - The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) approved a three-year grant for ASPIRA's Health Careers Program. The first year budget is \$271,259. If awarded the same amount each year until 1999, the total award will reach \$813,777. We are especially pleased with this grant. It is the last renewal grant pending of the major ASPIRA National Office grants. With this grant all existing program grants have been renewed. Ms. Nadine Cid, Program Assistant for this program for several years, has been promoted to Program Manager.
- **ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX)** - With the \$600,000 three year grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, ASPIRA has expanded the APEX program to New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico. Plans are being developed to expand the program to ASPIRA of Florida and ASPIRA of Connecticut early next year. APEX received three national awards: **The Golden Apple** Award from Working Mother magazine; the **USA Today Award for Community Solutions for Excellence**; and the **La Promesa** Award from the National Latino Children's Agenda. The latter was given at the Agenda's national conference in San Antonio, Texas.
- **ASPIRACorps** - With the \$700,000 one-year grant approved by the Corporation for National and Community Service ASPIRACorps (the ASPIRA/AmeriCorps program) began and is currently completing recruitment of 44 members at ASPIRA of Connecticut, ASPIRA of Pennsylvania and ASPIRA of New Jersey. The National Office recently hired Ms. Shanna Abeloff as Program Manager for ASPIRACorps. A former Program Officer at the Corporation for National and Community Service, Ms. Abeloff brings a wealth of experience in community service and AmeriCorps to ASPIRA.

- **Mathematics and Science Academy** - With a \$300,000 two-year grant from the Carnegie Corporation, the ASPIRA Mathematics and Science Academy is being expanded. The current site at ASPIRA of Illinois, is continuing development of the MAS program. The MAS program has been expanded to ASPIRA of Florida, where over \$30,000 will be used for a mathematics and science enrichment program at the Accolade Alternative school. The main challenge in this initiative has been hiring a Program Manager. Over 30 candidates were considered, and finally, Mr. Alvaro Starpoli, an engineer with extensive experience in pre-college mathematics and science programs has been hired.
- **Teachers, Parents and Organizations for Students (TOPS)** - With the EXXON Corporation grant (\$200,000 for two years) and the Houston Endowment (\$20,000 for one year) grant, ASPIRA's Teachers, Organizations, and Parents for Students (TOPS) program began in three cities in Texas: Houston, Corpus Christi and San Antonio. The program was launched with a major reception for the press at EXXON in Houston, which I attended to represent ASPIRA. Mini-grants were awarded to ASPIRA of Puerto Rico and ASPIRA of Florida to continue some of the TOPS activities initiated three years ago with Department of Education Funding. The program has now successfully completed its first year, with reports being submitted both to the EXXON Corporation and the Houston Endowment. At the Houston site, EXXON employee volunteers are working with TOPS students at the Hogg Middle School. A request was submitted to the Houston Endowment to expand the program in Houston to a second school for next year. The program has also produced a host of materials, including a revised Implementation Guide, a Coach Manual and a Student Manual. Promotional materials, such as a program brochure and the TOPS newsletter continue to be produced.
- **Corporate Volunteerism** - With the \$140,000 two year grant from the Hitachi Foundation the model program to promote Corporate Volunteerism at ASPIRA of Connecticut is moving forward rapidly. The Marketing Lab has been set up and is operating. Several local firms have agreements with ASPIRA to promote employee volunteerism and a selected group of corporations have agreed to a corporate review to assist them in promoting volunteerism. The latest report submitted to the Hitachi Foundation was lauded by the Foundation. The program was also featured in the Hitachi Foundation Newsletter. We are currently completing a highly sophisticated Corporate Review instrument to be used in the second phase of the program. A Corporate volunteer survey was completed in December.
- **Mobilization for Equity** - With the grant from the Ford Foundation through the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) - \$140,000 over two years- we have expanded our advocacy work and will soon be initiating trainings of students and parents at each Associate. ASPIRA has been participating actively in NCAS activities, including all Board meetings. I participated in a national board meeting in Chicago and facilitated the discussion of the NCAS strategic plan.

- **ASPIRA Public Policy Leadership Program** - The APPLP graduation took place on August 2, 1996. We are currently seeking funding from Toyota and others to continue this valuable program. Funding will also be sought from The Coca Cola Co.
- **Program Evaluation** - A comprehensive Evaluation Guide for the Association is being developed. We expect to complete the model design by March, 1997. The national training held at ETS November 21 - 24, 1996 at which a two-day workshop on program evaluation was conducted, was the first step in establishing a uniform guide for program evaluation for the Association and the Associates. This also moves forward the agenda of solidifying the Association as a national organization.

Strengthening the ASPIRA Association

- Work continues on a draft Strategic Plan for the ASPIRA Association, which will again be the topic of the Board retreat at ETS in January, 1997. This strategic plan is meant to set the parameters for the development of the Association and guides for the development of the Associates into the year 2000.
- Efforts to further strengthen the ASPIRA Association as a national organization continue as the strategic plan is being developed. The initiative began last year of viewing ASPIRA more as an Association, is beginning to permeate all aspects of the National Office's activities. As an example, all ASPIRA National Office publications will now stress the Association and the Associates as well as the National Office. For the first time, the Annual Report will include significant sections on the Associates.
- Another effort to seek uniformity and to support the Associates, was the purchase of the MIP accounting system by ASPIRA of Connecticut and ASPIRA of New Jersey. Working with the Associate offices in Connecticut and New Jersey, funding was identified to purchase the system for these two offices. All Associate offices now have the MIP system, except ASPIRA of Florida, that is looking at the possibility of purchasing it.
- As a result of the purchase of the MIP accounting system by all the Associate offices, a training will take place for all Associate accountants at Educational Testing Service that will run concurrently with the National Board Retreat.
- The National Office, for the first time, developed a National Staff Directory for the entire ASPIRA Association. The directory lists the telephone, fax and e-mail numbers of all the staff at each of the offices. This directory, which will be updated quarterly, serves to enhance communications among the Associate offices and, again, to create a further sense among staff that they belong to a national organization.

Collaboratives

- **New Collaboratives** - During this period, several new formal collaborations were initiated. The most important accomplishment is that Ms. Hilda Crespo, Director of Education and Federal Affairs, is now dedicated **full-time** to maintaining and expanding current collaboratives and to develop new ones both at the national and local levels. New collaboratives include formal agreements with three organizations to develop joint initiatives nationally and locally: INROADS (a national program that promotes minorities in business careers the Public Education Fund Network (a national program to promote democratic values through support of public education), the National Association of Title I Parents; the United Nations Association (that promotes education on international affairs); and MEGA Skills (a national parent training program). Other collaboratives are being explored, including a formal collaborative with Howard University to provide increased opportunities (admission and scholarships) for Latinos at that institution.
- ASPIRA has also joined the President's Commission on Service that will hold a summit in May. The summit kickoff at The White House featured the President and former President Bush. The Summit will be chaired by Gen. Colin Powell and Henry Cisneros.
- **Participation on Boards** - The National Executive Director continues to serve on several national boards and advisory groups. These include, among others:
 - National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (Chair)
 - Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (Secretary of the Board)
 - Model Institutions for Excellence (NSF) National Leadership Council (Chair)
 - Mid-Atlantic Region Education Laboratory (Temple University)
 - MEGA Skills National Advisory Board
 - Independent Sector - Annual Conference Committee
 - National Commission on Teaching (Columbia University) Advisory Board
 - Memphis State University, Graduate School of Education - National Advisory Board

Other ASPIRA staff participate in numerous committees and boards of various organizations.

- **Isla Antillana** - The National Office co-sponsored, with the Institute for Puerto Rican Arts and Culture and Equity Research, a presentation of *Isla Antillana*, a musical that recounts the 500 year history of Puerto Rico. The presentation was on November 20, 1996 at the Lincoln Theater in Washington, DC. This provided ASPIRA significant visibility in the Washington Latino community. ASPIRA had a full-page advertisement in the official program of the event.

National Visibility

- In addition to the exposure ASPIRA received through the release of the NHLA reports, the

National Executive Director has participated in numerous interviews, TV and radio shows. Moreover, presentations have been made at various conferences and meetings, including the national conference on Minorities with Disabilities, the national *Nuestra Gente* conference in Washington,

Development

- **Short-Term Prospects** - In the area of development, there are several proposals, concept papers and other information that are being submitted to federal agencies and foundations. These prospects include:
 - Proposal submitted to the DHHS for a program to disseminate materials on health careers.
 - The Robert Woods Johnson Foundation has requested a proposal to expand our Health Careers program. This grant will supplement the DHHS Health Careers grant.
 - The Ford Foundation has requested a Concept Paper for a major four-year, organizational development grant.
 - A proposal is being submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a major materials development and dissemination to involve parents in mathematics and science education. This will supplement the Carnegie Corporation grant.
 - A preliminary proposal was submitted to the Mott Foundation for the APPLP program. We have been contacted by the Foundation to submit a full proposal.
- **Other Initiatives** - Funding is actively being sought from over 30 corporations for the National Conference. Funding sources are also being sought for the educational program based on *Mt Puerto Rico*. A proposal is being developed for Dr. Pantoja.
- **Survey of Associates** - A survey of the Associates was conducted to ascertain their current development efforts and development needs as a first step in enhancing our overall development capability. A report on the findings was developed. The report is quite revealing in terms of the sources of funding for the Associates (little corporate support) and in terms of marketing. Only one Associate produces and annual report and only one produces a newsletter. This will be a topic for discussion at the next meeting of the Council of Executive Directors. The National Office will develop a strategy to assist the Associates in developing publications.
- **Memo to Funders** - The first issue of *Memo to Funders* was sent to all ASPIRA funders. The *Memo*, which is similar to the Memo to the Board fax-o-gram, offers a summary of

accomplishments to all government, corporate and foundation funders. Funders are specifically recognized. The purpose of the *Memo* is to have a targeted information medium to keep funders informed of ASPIRA's activities.

- The National Office continues to produce the *Memo to the Board* a periodic update of ASPIRA National office activities for the National Board of Directors.
- **Staff Development** - The Ford Foundation provided a grant to The Management Assistance Group to provide technical assistance to Ford grantees. ASPIRA was included. Both Development Coordinators have participated in trainings free of cost: Ms. Karon Cox attended a training in Florida on Strategic Fundraising offered by The Grantmanship Center. Ms. Julia Howell Barros participated in a training on fundraising (Diversifying Funding Sources) and another on fund-raising in California. These trainings will be used to train and provide technical assistance to the Associates.

Support for the Associates

- In addition to the national training conducted at ETS on November 21 - 24, 1996, the National Office continues to support the Associates, particularly ASPIRA of Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Additional on-site technical assistance in finance (accounting/budgeting) and program planning was offered, in addition to the loan funding and other support. Technical assistance is also offered to all the Associates on development of National Programs. In addition to technical assistance, the National Office is now covering the cost of America On-Line for ASPIRA of Connecticut, ASPIRA of New Jersey and ASPIRA of Pennsylvania to begin on-line communications.

Finance and Administration

- **Ms. Candy Vidal Joins ASPIRA Full-Time** - The most important accomplishment in this area is that the National Office's Financial Consultant, Ms. Candy Vidal, has accepted to join the National Office full time beginning in January, 1996. Ms. Vidal has been the financial consultant for ASPIRA for several years and has proven to be an extremely valuable asset to the organization. More recently, she has provided training at the national training at ETS, and technical assistance to ASPIRA of Pennsylvania and ASPIRA of New York. Hiring Ms. Vidal will allow the National Office to expand and enhance its accounting and finance systems. Most importantly, it will allow us to significantly increase our direct technical assistance to the Associates, which will be a major part of her role as a full time staff.
- **National Office Audit** - The annual audit of the ASPIRA Association's financial statements and the federal (OMB-133) audits were completed by Arthur Anderson. As reported to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors by Arthur Anderson, the audit was totally "clean." There were no recommendations made by the auditors.

- **New Reimbursement Procedure** - In order to reduce the paperwork burden on the Associate offices, we initiated an experiment initiated almost two years ago to limit the back-up documentation required for an Associate to receive reimbursements from the National Office for national program costs. This experiment, developed in consultation with our auditors, Arthur Anderson, applied to Associates that had, on file at the National Office, up-to-date audited Financial Statements and Federal audits. This experiment has worked extraordinarily well. It has reduced paperwork burdens on the Associates and has increased efficiency and the speed of reimbursements at the National Office. Based on the results of the experiment, we have just issued a new procedure. As of November 1, 1996, those Associates who have their audits up to date on file at the National office, **will not have to submit any backup documentation to receive reimbursements.** All that will be required is the monthly financial statement
- **National Office Budget** - Though the budget for 1996-97 is tight, a balanced budget was submitted to the Board of Directors. The proposed budget is just over \$2 million, of which, again, over \$1 million will be transferred to the Associate Offices. As of September, 1996, there is a slight surplus of revenues over expenditures.
- **Physical Facilities** - The National Office will now occupy the entire 8th floor of the building. We have added new staff, which required us to use the expansion space we had set aside for both storage and office space. We are already occupying two of the four offices. Next year, funds will be set aside for remodeling so as to incorporate the expansion space into the regular ASPIRA office space. The National Office also closed for a day in December for our annual cleaning. This set-aside day allows all staff to update their files, clean and organize their workspaces and to store unused materials.
- **Technology** - Significant enhancements of the National Office's computers have been made during this period. A consultant is being sought to set up and maintain a local area network. Several computers were upgraded and new computers purchased. The National Office is now totally ready for a network.
- **Review of Organizational Structure** - Based on a review of office functions, new production units are being created to reduce duplication of effort and increase efficiency. The first unit to be created has been the publications/technology unit. We are now seeking a second program assistant with expertise in computers and publications to integrate all publications production. Additional software has been purchased. This unit will reduce our publications costs as many publications will now be produced "in-house", and it will also help increase the quality and uniformity of our publications.
- **Personnel Committee** - In order to deal more effectively with personnel issues, a Personnel Committee for the National Office has been formed. The committee, composed of Program managers, has four charges: staff recruitment (Ms. Julia Howell-Barros), Professional

Development (Ms. Karon Cox) Personnel Orientation and Guidance (Ms. Nadine Cid), and Office Operations (Ms. Hilda Crespo)

- **Staff Development** - A staff development survey is being completed. The survey will be the basis for a staff development plan, the first at the National Office. Staff development has, and will continue to be a priority. Several staff members have participated in external trainings. These include:
 - Ms. Christa Stephens - Program Management
 - Ms. Julia Howell-Barros - Diversifying Funding Sources
 - Ms. Karon Cox - Strategic Fundraising
 - Ms. Catherine Kerley - Publications Software

ASPIRA By-Laws Review

As discussed in the last National Board of Directors meeting, there are several amendments that had been approved by the National Board to the By-Laws that had not been incorporated into the document, as well as several practices that were not sanctioned. The National Board directed the National Executive Director to draft the appropriate amendments and to submit changes to the Executive Committee at its next meeting. The By-Laws were reviewed and a draft including amendments was submitted to the Executive Committee. These proposals were discussed and the Executive Committee meeting in October, 1996. A second draft is being submitted to the Board of Directors at the January meeting. After discussion, final approval is expected at the annual meeting of the Board in August.

Committee on Nominations

There was extensive discussion at the Executive Committee meeting about the need to structure a nominations procedures for the election of officers and at-large members of the National Board of Directors. An ad-hoc committee was formed to develop a procedure for nominations. The committee met via conference call on two occasions. The Executive Director drafted a document that spells out a nominations process and procedure. This document was discussed during the second conference call. The draft document is being submitted for approval to the full Board at its January, 1997 meeting.

New Board Officers

At the last regular meeting of the National Board of Directors, it elected new officers. These are:

Ms. Raquel Ortiz (At-Large) - Chairperson
Mr. Wilfredo Matos (ASPIRA of CT.) - Vice Chairperson, Program
Ms. Myma RIVERA (At-Large) - Vice Chairperson, Finance
Mr. Daniel Agosto (ASPIRA of NY) - Vice Chairperson, Personnel
Mr. Anibal Ramos (ASPIRA of NJ) - Secretary
Ms. Lourdes García (ASPIRA of IL) - Treasurer

Progress Report
August, 1996
page 12

Since, Ms. Lourdes Garcia has resigned as Chairperson of ASPIRA of Illinois, and hence, as a member and officer of the National Board of Directors. As of this writing, no replacement has been elected to substitute for Ms. Garcia.



ASPIRA Association, Inc.
Washington, DC

PROGRESS REPORT

to the:

**Executive Committee
of the
National Board of Directors**

Submitted by:

**Ronald Blackburn-Moreno
President**

ASPIRA Association, Inc.
1444 I St., NW Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20005

December 12, 1997



PROGRESS REPORT

to the

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

of the

ASPIRA Association

Ronald Blackburn-Moreno
President

December 12, 1997

Introduction

This Report covers the activities of the National Office between August 1997 and December 1997. The last report to the Board of Directors was presented at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors in August, 1997.

We are very pleased that, during this period, ASPIRA of Illinois and ASPIRA of New Jersey have appointed new Executive Directors. As the Board members were informed, Mr. José Rodríguez was appointed ED of ASPIRA of Illinois and Mr. William Colón was appointed ED of ASPIRA of New Jersey. We welcome these new Executive Directors to the Council of Executive Directors.

It must also be announced that ASPIRA of Pennsylvania has made extraordinary progress in meeting its financial obligations and in reducing its deficit, and has initiated payment of the long-term loan extended by the National Office. These funds will return to the Endowment Fund.

The past five months have been among the busiest and most productive quarters for the ASPIRA National Office in the past two years in all areas. The main activities were the National Conference, the development of over 15 proposals for national programs and the Associate offices, the annual audit by Arthur Anderson, the restructuring of the National Office, the extensive participation as speakers and presenters in over 20 national

conferences and meetings, participation and the time invested in advocacy, especially around the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and TRIO programs.

The major accomplishments and activities of the National Office included:

ASPIRA National Conference ASPIRA held its second National Conference, *Empowering Communities Through Entrepreneurship and Technology*, held in Washington, DC, October 10-12, 1997. The Conference was a resounding success in terms of visibility and Associate participation. Though the number of paying registrants and income were below expectations (although the cost was also lower than last year's), over 300 participants, -including over 200 students (60 *Aspirantes*)- were exposed to a range of topics related to entrepreneurship and technology in over 20 sessions, as well as to distinguished keynote speakers that included, among others, Dr. Antonia Pantoja, Aida Alvarez, and Hon. Richard Gephardt. A special keynote address was delivered by Sydney Valerio, and *ASPIRANTE* from New York. A dance with Willie Colon was the highlight social event of the Conference. The evaluations were extremely positive, especially among students who felt that this conference was much more oriented toward students than last year's. The Conference received the attention of the press, as well as funders and collaborators.

Support of the Associates - Extensive support was provided to Associates in the development of the Talent Search proposals, including the development of the proposal for ASPIRA of Connecticut, on-site assistance to ASPIRA of New Jersey, and direct assistance to two other Associates in writing their Talent Search grants. This was a major activity for the National Office for almost a month. Assistance was also provided in communications and management, including several publications that were produced for Associate offices, such as the ASPIRA of New York Newsletter and Corporate Information package. In addition, the National Office will support ASPIRA of Connecticut by conducting a management assessment in early January. The Director of Management Systems and Accounting is scheduling five on-site visits to Associates in January and February as well. Finally, to reduce the burden on ASPIRA of Pennsylvania, the term of the loan from the National Office was extended. As indicated, ASPIRA of Pennsylvania has already initiated repayment.

National Programs The MAS program was expanded to Florida and will be expanded to New York and Pennsylvania sites this summer. A new grant for \$60,000 was received for MAS from the American Honda Foundation. A new grant for \$174,000 was received for APPLP from the Kellogg Foundation. The APEX program continues to exceed the projected number of parents graduating and is now firm in Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico. It continues to receive national publicity, such as in *Latina Magazine*. ASPIRACorps is now recruiting 50 ASPIRACorps members on Connecticut, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Development – This is an area where the National Office has been most active. Over 10 new proposals have been submitted to foundations and corporations for programs alone. Most have been negotiated and will receive funds this year. A special organizational development proposal is being considered by The Ford Foundation, in addition to large grant proposals submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Annenberg, GTE, and National Endowment of the Humanities, among others. New corporate funders have been added. We are expecting funding from Sears, Marriott and AT&T, among others. We continue to produce the *Memo to Funders*, to inform all our current and prospective funders of ASPIRA activities. Moreover, a comprehensive development plan was produced that includes targets, funders and activities to increase funding for the National Office and for the Associates.

National Visibility This has been another especially productive area. ASPIRA was designated by *Money Magazine* as one of the ten A+ Charities in the country in its special forecast edition in December. The National Office staff has made presentations in over 20 national conferences and meetings. I have delivered over 10 keynote addresses and various meetings around the country.

Advocacy This has also been an active time for ASPIRA advocacy, particularly in support of the TRIO programs in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and in the reauthorization of the Health professions act. ASPIRA has also participated in the Secretary of Education's committee on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and his Committee on the U.S. Urban Education Initiative with other major national organizations. After two years, ASPIRA turned over the chair of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO). ASPIRA led the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda -the organization that brings together the 30 major national Hispanic organizations- in developing and issuing a Report Card on Presidential appointments, which received national press coverage. It remains active in NHLA, leading delegations to meetings with three Cabinet secretaries on presidential appointments. the Hispanic Coalition for Hispanic Advancement, organized through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Moreover, ASPIRA remains very active with the National Science Foundation in setting national science education policy. Over 12 Policy Briefs were developed and, based on multiple requests from other organizations on the issues, ASPIRA commissioned a paper on the Political Relationship Between Puerto Rico and the U.S. The paper will be delivered to all members of Congress along with a copy of *Mi Puerto Rico*, as well as among our Associates and in our communities.

Publications and Research In addition to the paper on Puerto Rico and the Policy Briefs, ASPIRA issued its Fall Newsletter in time for the National Conference. We are currently working on our Annual Report that, for the first time, will be a report of the entire Association. We continue to work on the *Condition of Puerto Rican and Latino Education A Statistical Abstract*.

Programs have also issued program-specific publications. We also continue to work with ETS on the ASPIRA CD-ROM and Web Site design.

Strategic Plan After two years of discussions, the first draft of the of the ASPIRA Association Strategic Plan 1998-2003 was completed and is being submitted to the Board of Directors. The draft will be sent to all the Associates for further refinement in Association-wide discussions, and will be submitted for final approval to the National Board at its February meeting. This is the first time that the ASPIRA Association develops a strategic plan for the Association as a whole.

Collaborations The collaboration with Educational Testing Service was revised, based on a request by ETS, but was reaffirmed. ETS will now be supporting more training of Associates in areas to support students services, and will not longer support board retreats, either at the National or local levels. The New Counselors Training has been extended. It will now be the Annual Training, to include program managers, teachers, counselors and other staff. The March training is already being planned with ETS. ASPIRA also signed two formal collaborations: the Public Education Network and the American Association of University Women. ASPIRA continues to actively partner with over 20 organizations.

National Board of Directors The By-Laws was finalized, collecting the amendments approved by the National Board. The Article of Association were also updated based on amendments approved by the Board of Directors. These will be distributed widely among the Associates. We continue to produce the *Memo to the Board*, though because of the conference only one issue was produced during this period.

Administration/Finance - The National Office was restructured. John Villamil was appointed Executive Vice President and is now overseeing all national programs. The former director of the Education and Government Relations was appointed Vice President for Policy and Government Affairs. The annual audit by Arthur Anderson was completed, and ASPIRA received a "clean" audit. The National Office computer network is now fully operational and IBM gave the National Office two lap-top computers. The next step is developing the ASPIRA Intranet. The endowment fund, while it lost some during the recent downturn on Wall Street, is up to almost \$1 million again. In addition, the Administrative Manual is under review. Recommendations have been completed and will be discussed with the National Board at the next meeting. The National Office continues to provide technical assistance to the Associates in Management and Accounting. In January, site visits will be made to Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois to provide assistance on their accounting system.

The main challenge of the National Office will be to ensure that it provides adequate support to ASPIRA of Illinois, New Jersey and continued support to ASPIRA of

Pennsylvania and ASPIRA of Connecticut, the Associates most in need. Moreover, we still need to increase our funding for APPLP and APEX to ensure their continue, since both are in their last year of funding. Funding must also be sought for the Summer National Public Policy Leadership Program, since Toyota USA funding ended after seven years. Finally, to ensure we end the year either balanced or with a surplus, unrestricted giving needs to be increased.

The ASPIRA National Conference

The second ASPIRA National Conference *Empowering Communities Through Entrepreneurship and Technology*, was held October 8-10th 1997 in Washington, DC. The National Office dedicated two full months -full time- to planning and executing the Conference. The Conference reflected extensive discussions with the Executive Directors and had two strands: Youth Entrepreneurship Development and Non-Profit Organization Sustainability Through Entrepreneurship. Technology was discussed throughout conference. At the Conference, ASPIRA committed to launching a new initiative in entrepreneurship development of youth and organizations as a strategy to develop the community.

Over 100 speakers presented at over 20 panels and workshops. All presenters at the Conference were students. In addition, there was an emotional keynote address by a student from ASPIRA of NY. Dr. Antonia Pantoja, founder of ASPIRA attended the Conference, delivered the main keynote address and met with the Executive Directors of three hours to discuss the new initiative launched by ASPIRA.

Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the Small Business Administration and the first Puerto Rican to be in a cabinet-level position, delivered a keynote address at the opening reception. Another keynote address was delivered by Mr. John López of López Foods. Welcoming the guests was Congressman Xavier Beserra (D-CA). So have Congressman Richard Gephardt, Democratic Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, and, most importantly, Dr. Antonia Pantoja. The Honorable Richard Gephardt, Democratic Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, delivered the morning keynote address. As indicated, Sydney Valerio, an *Aspirante* from New York, won the Association-wide contest to deliver the luncheon keynote address that was followed by Dr. Pantoja. She delivered a high quality, emotional speech. Dr. Hugo Patiño, Vice President for Research and Development of Coors Brewing, delivered another keynote address.

The Conference featured various activities for students, including several sessions to expose them to successful Puerto Rican and Latino entrepreneurs. Students also participated extensively in sessions on youth entrepreneurship development. Sessions also included topics on entrepreneurship for non-profit organizations, including sessions on developing business plans, developing communications plans and marketing. In addition, there were over 15 exhibits and the documentary *Mi Puerto Rico* ran continuously, along with a documentary on immigration (Coors) and the ASPIRA video.

In addition to the formal sessions, students had a welcome disco party and the main social event was the dance with Willie Colón and Peligro

The organization of the Conference was excellent according to the evaluations. Much had been learned from the first National Conference last year

The evaluation of the Conference was very encouraging. The overall evaluation was highly positive. Most importantly was the evaluation of students. Students felt that the Conference was much more addressed towards them, that they had a greater role and that the sessions benefited them much more than last year.

ASPIRA is very pleased with the registrations of the Associate offices. Almost all the Associate offices reached their registration goals. All participated extensively in the Conference. All the Executive Directors (except one) and a significant number of staff, were present.

The total number of paying registrants at the Conference, however, was somewhat disappointing. Little over 100 people formally registered (and paid) for the Conference. This is down from 200 last year. While the costs this year were certainly lower (\$90,000 vs. \$150,000), the additional revenue from paying participants would have ensured a surplus, given that almost \$70,000 was raised in corporate support, advertisements and exhibits.

The Association must seriously consider holding national conferences every year. A preliminary evaluation shows that the participation rates are likely to remain low, as only a small constituency exists in the states we serve. Moreover, the effort by the National Office -in time and fund-raising- raise serious questions regarding the feasibility of holding a conference every year. The organization of the National Conference seriously hinders fund-raising because a significant amount of fund-raising for several months is directed at the Conference. In terms of National Office operations, the small staff at the National Office must dedicate an inordinate amount of time and effort to organizing the Conference, distracting from their programs and normal activities.

To counter the arguments of the time of year and the site, the National Puerto Rican Coalition, an organization with an adult constituency similar to ours, is also having serious problems with participation in their conference and this year it was held in New York, where it could be expected that large numbers of Puerto Rican would attend. This was not the case.

There are several possibilities, including holding smaller, regional meetings or national youth conferences, on specific topics and holding a National Conference every three or five years.

Despite the challenges, we are very pleased with the National Conference. It was a major ASPIRA event that raised visibility, brought the Associates (especially students) together, and served to launch a new initiative.

Support of the Associates

Assistance to the Associate offices was the second most important endeavor undertaken at the National Office over these four months. The main support was assistance in developing Talent Search proposals for the Associate offices, one of the core ASPIRA programs that, for all Associates, was up for renewal this year. The National Office developed the full proposal for ASPIRA of Connecticut. Ms. Hilda Crespo provided on-site technical assistance for three full days to ASPIRA of New Jersey, writing significant portions of the proposal. In addition, the National Office reviewed the proposals of ASPIRA of New York and ASPIRA of Puerto Rico and provided technical assistance to ASPIRA of Florida. A model proposal provided by ASPIRA of Pennsylvania was turned into a template and distributed to all the Associates, and every Associate that requested assistance received assistance. The National Office staff dedicated over a month to this task.

Assistance was also provided in communications and management, including several publications that were produced for Associate offices, such as the ASPIRA of New York Newsletter and Corporate Information package. These publications have been offered free of charge to all the Associate offices. In addition, the National Office continues to cover the cost of America On-Line for Associates to connect them to the Internet. The National Office will be assisting ASPIRA of Pennsylvania in developing their computer network. This will be done on-site by our specialist in computer technology.

Special support was provided to ASPIRA of New Jersey during the transition of Executive Directors. I spent a full day on-site with Ms. Wanda de Jesús to provide a general orientation on the Association, ASPIRA and national programs. I also visited ASPIRA of Puerto Rico to discuss their development needs and priorities.

This assistance is in addition to the support and technical assistance provided by the National Office Program Managers on programs, which has been extensive over this period.

In addition, the National Office will support ASPIRA of Connecticut by conducting a management assessment in early January. This will serve as a model, which can be provided as a service to the other Associates.

The Director of Management Systems and Accounting is scheduling five on-site visits to Associates in January and February as well. These visits will continue, as developing mechanized accounting systems remains one of the major challenges of several Associates.

Finally, to reduce the burden on ASPIRA of Pennsylvania, the term of the loan from the National Office was extended. As indicated, ASPIRA of Pennsylvania has already initiated repayment.

National Programs

The MAS program was expanded to Florida and will be expanded to New York and Pennsylvania sites this summer. A new grant for \$60,000 was received for MAS from the American Honda Foundation that will expand the program at the Accolade School. Over 120 6th to 8th graders are participating in the program. A complete MAS Manual was completed. New Grant proposals for the MAS program have been submitted to the Annenberg Foundation, and the GTE Foundation.

A new grant for \$174,000 was received for APPLP from the Kellogg Foundation. The grant will be used to supplement funding for this program from the Ford Foundation. Funding is being sought from other sources to cover the Summer Public Policy Leadership Program which Toyota USA Foundation funded for seven years.

The APEX program continues to exceed the projected number of parents graduating and is now firm in Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico. Over 1,200 parents have graduated from the program. APEX has now been expanded to ASPIRA of Connecticut. A new Student Rights Workshop has been added. It continues to receive national publicity, such as in *Latina Magazine*, as well as support from local school districts. ASPIRA along with other major national organizations, has been active, through APEX, in the National Coalition for Families in Education, the Secretary of Education's Parental Involvement Initiative. ASPIRA of Pennsylvania received a grant for APEX from the school system.

ASPIRACorps is now recruiting 50 ASPIRACorps members on Connecticut, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. A new ASPIRACorps Program Manager was appointed, as was a new coordinator in New Jersey. ASPIRA of Pennsylvania will have 20 ASPIRACorps members this year.

The main challenges in the program area remain the low recruitment rate of parents at some of the start-up sites for APEX and the match for the AmeriCorps program. The latter is substantial and will require a concerted fund-raising effort.

Public Policy and Advocacy

This has been an active time for ASPIRA public policy and advocacy, particularly in our efforts to support the TRIO programs in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and our efforts and in the reauthorization of the Public Health Service Act. ASPIRA has supported the National Council of Equal Opportunity Centers (NCEO) in their position regarding TRIO and the reauthorization. ASPIRA is proposing that no major changes be made to TRIO. Many Latino organizations, based on misinformation have proposed significant changes to TRIO so it will serve more Hispanic students. ASPIRA has stood alone among these organizations on this issue. ASPIRA did negotiate a compromise with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on new language.

ASPIRA is also working on the Hispanic Drop-Out Prevention Act, supporting programs to reduce the Latino drop-out rate. The problem with this legislation is that, again, it contains changes to TRIO that ASPIRA rejects.

ASPIRA has been active in support of funding for Hispanic Serving Institutions, also under reauthorization. It is a member of the Secretary of Education's advisory group on this issue and we have met with the Secretary twice to discuss this proposal. ASPIRA is also on the Secretary of Education's Task Force on Urban Education, along with prominent organizations such as the Council of the Great City Schools, the NEA, the AFT, the Urban League, the Urban Coalition and the Rainbow Coalition. Legislation will be presented this year to create a new federal program: Education Opportunity Zones. ASPIRA is a member of the National Advisory Committee of the President's Commission on Employment of People with Disabilities.

ASPIRA remains active in several other organizations, especially the Hispanic Education Coalition and the Hispanic Health Education Coalition.

After two years as Chair, ASPIRA turned over the chair of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLEA) to the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO). ASPIRA led the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda - the organization that brings together the 30 major national Hispanic organizations - in developing and issuing a Report Card on Presidential appointments, which received national press coverage. Before the transition, ASPIRA led delegations of Latino leaders in meetings with Secretary Remy of the Department of Education, the Attorney General, Janet Reno, and the Secretary of the Treasury, Robert Rubin, to discuss appointments of Latinos to top positions in government. ASPIRA also supported over 20 Latino candidates for different positions, including many Puerto Ricans such as Aida Alvarez, Ida Castro, Gil Casellas, Mari Carmen Aponte (for Ambassador to the Dominican Republic) and, more recently, Ileana Colón-Carlo for Comptroller General of the U.S. ASPIRA is now also active in the Coalition for Hispanic Advancement, organized by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

ASPIRA has also provided input into the following legislation/initiatives

- The National Dropout Prevention Act,
- **Presidents Initiative on Testing,**
- America Reads,
- School to Work Legislation,
- Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act,
- Reauthorization of the Public Health Service Act,
- Safe and Drug Free Schools,
- Improving Teacher Quality for the 21st Century,
- 21st Century Schools,
- The Race Initiative,
- Presidents Initiative on Employment of People with Disabilities,
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers,

Key new grant programs Educational Opportunity Zones.

- English Only,
- Distance Learning,
- Education Standards Initiative,
- The Tobacco Settlement,
- Presidents Initiative on Child Care, and
- School College Partnerships

Of special importance also has been that ASPIRA continues to Chair the Hispanic Health Education Coalition (HHEC) that is very active with the reauthorization of the Public Health Service Act, especially protecting the Office of Minority Health funding.

An important event for ASPIRA was the publication of a paper, commissioned to Dr. José Garriga Pico of the University of Puerto Rico on the Political Relationship Between Puerto Rico and the U.S. Because of the furor over the Young Bill on the status of Puerto Rico, many national Latino organizations have requested information on this issue. We also felt that there was little information in the community on this issue as well. Therefore, we commissioned a paper that would, in an objective, non-partisan way, would just present the constitutional history of the Island, all positions regarding status and the main issues being discussed in the Young Bill. This Paper, along with a copy of the film *Mi Puerto Rico*, will be distributed to every member of Congress. The paper will also be distributed to our Associates and the Puerto Rican community.

Finally, ASPIRA remains very active with the National Science Foundation in setting national science education policy, as we responded to the request of ASPIRA of New York that we send letters to all the members of the Board of Trustees of City University protesting the attacks on Hostos Community College and on its President, ASPIRANTE, Isaura Santiago Santiago. Over 12 Policy Briefs were developed as will be discussed below.

Publications and Research

Other than the Policy Briefs that ASPIRA has produced over the past few years, the National Office has not been engaged in research. This year, ASPIRA is developing a comprehensive statistical compendium on "*The Condition of Education of Puerto Rican and Latino Youth*." The compendium will include statistics for pre-school, elementary and secondary school, college and graduate school. It will also include data on teachers, school environment and others. This will be the first major national statistical compendium of Puerto Rican and Latino education since the 1990 Condition of Latino Education released by the National Council of La Raza. The outline of the report is already complete. Three Everett Interns worked on this project during the summer and a part time fellow is currently working on it. A full time fellow has been requested to Kraft General Foods to complete the work. We hope to complete it before the summer.

In addition, ASPIRA is working on the following Issue Briefs.

- Getting Educational Technology in the Classroom,
- Safe Disciplined and Drug Free Schools,
- Making Quality Preschool Opportunities Available,

- Keeping Schools Open as Safe Havens for Learning,
- Helping Families Pay for and Think About College Early,
- The National Dropout Prevention Act,
- Presidents Initiative on Testing,
- America Reads Challenge,
- School to Work Legislation,
- Improving Teacher Quality for the 21st Century,
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and
- School College Partnerships

Five of these have been completed and are being prepared for distribution

ASPIRA published its Fall Newsletter, which was distributed at the National Conference as well as to 4,000 people on our mailing list. We have done extensive work up-dating our mailing lists, which we are now confident are fairly accurate. We are also completing our annual report for 1997, which should be ready in February. Again, the paper on Puerto Rico was published and is in distribution.

The National Office continued to publish the "Memo to Funders" which it sends periodically to current funders. A new publication is "What Works with Latino Youth" targeted to potential funders and is also being sent this month. To over 120 potential funders, including foundations and corporations

Development

This is the area where the National Office has been most active. Over 10 new grant proposals have been submitted to foundations and corporations for programs alone. Most have been negotiated and will receive funds this year. The Ford Foundation is considering a special organizational development proposal submitted by ASPIRA. After negotiating with the Foundation, support was requested to develop a series of initiatives to further develop the organization. These included communications, technology, staff and board training, and others. In all, ASPIRA requested \$800,000 for two years. This proposal will be considered in January and the grant should be made this fiscal year. In addition to large grant proposals submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for a study of Latino Youth Violence (another proposal to RWJF on health careers is also pending) and to the Annenberg and GTE foundations for MAS. A proposal was submitted to the National Endowment of the Humanities for development of educational materials. A proposal was submitted to the Ana G. Méndez University System in Puerto Rico to conduct a national study on the viability of Puerto Rican students from the mainland studying in Puerto Rico. Finally, a proposal to supplement the APPLP program was submitted to the National Council of Latino Leadership, which is awarding grants obtained from the Ford Foundation.

New corporate funders have been added. We are expecting funding from Sears, Marriott and AT&T, among others. Moreover, a comprehensive development plan was produced

*Dr. P. Santiago
Frank - ASPIRA
Crisis - ASPIRA*

that includes targets, funders and activities to increase funding for the National Office and for the Associates. Proposals for programs are also pending with Anheuser Busch (printing) and Kraft General Foods (Policy Intern).

Certainly, unrestricted corporate funding is crucial. In addition to adding corporate funders, we have set organizing the Corporate Advisory Council as our first development priority in the corporate area this year.

National Visibility

This has been another especially productive area. The National Office staff has made presentations in over 20 national conferences and meetings. I have delivered over 10 keynote addresses and various meetings around the country.

Among others, these have included:

- National Public Radio *Talk of the Nation* with Ray Suárez – The Hispanic Drop-Out Rate
- American Society of Association Professionals (Washington, DC) – Keynote Address – Fund-Raising for Association Development
- National Hispanic Corporate Council (Greensboro, NC) – Education of Latino Youth
- Educational Testing Service (Washington Office) – Response presentation to Study on Puerto Rican Children in New Jersey Schools.
- La Guardia Community College (NYC) – Commencement Speech
- Kellogg Foundation Meeting – Hostos Community College – Panel of Hispanic Education Issues
- Public Education Network National Conference (Washington, DC) – Keynote Address – Bilingual Education
- Safe Schools Coalition National Conference (Orlando) – School-to-Work
- National Puerto Rican Coalition National Conference (NYC) – Panel – Higher Education Reauthorization and Advocacy

Other staff made presentations as well. Ms. Hilda Crespo made the following presentations:

- Independent Sector Conference - Conflict Resolutions
- NIDR Conference - Prejudice in Schools: A Hispanic Perspective,
- University of Virginia - Working with Hispanic and Culturally Diverse Students and Ten Student Rights

Collaborations

The collaboration with Educational Testing Service was revised, based on a request by ETS. Elenor Horne sent each Associate and the National Office a letter delineating their

Met with Elenor ETS regarding their position in our school. May not take place until Aug. 1997, however, may have for staff and students.

interests in the collaboration. ETS will no longer cover the costs of Board retreats for any Associate or the National Office, but will emphasize training of staff on matters related directly to student services and college-going. I responded to Ms. Horne and we met at ETS to discuss ETS's priorities regarding the collaboration. She was emphatic that ETS reaffirms its commitment to its collaboration with ASPIRA. We discussed options at length and we are now developing a formal proposal for the collaboration that will be shared with the Associates and submitted to ETS. We have already engaged in the planning of the New Counselors Training, which has been revised considerably. The new training format will include a diversity of topics and over 50 ASPIRA counselors, teachers, program staff and Executive Directors. The new counselor training will become a component of a much larger training.

ASPIRA also signed two formal collaborations: the Public Education Network and the American Association of University Women and is planning a signing with Public Ventures to promote our entrepreneurship programs.

ASPIRA continues to actively partner with over 20 organizations. We remain active in our collaborations with the Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility, where I was re-elected Secretary of the Board of Directors. I remain on the Board of Governors of the Mid Atlantic Region Educational Laboratory (Laboratory for Student Success) at Temple University. ASPIRA also co-sponsored a conference with The College Board to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Pell Grant (Washington) and I remain on the National Advisory Board of the College Board's Equity 2000 and on the National Science and Technology Advisory Board of the Ana G. Méndez University System in Puerto Rico. ASPIRA was also a member of the Planning Committee for the 1997 National Independent Sector Conference, held in St. Louis, MO. I am also on the National Board of the National Council on Latino Leadership.

Other active partnerships include:

- National Institute for Dispute Resolution;
- Dialogue on Diversity, (Member, Board of Directors);
- Youth Service;
- Quality Education for Minorities Network;
- Inclusion, Inc.;
- TERI Education Resources;
- Carlos Rosario Center;
- Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco;
- Beyond Beijing;
- Council of Chief State School Officers;
- American Association for the Advancement of Science;
- American Council on Education;
- The New Millennium; and
- Children's Defense Fund

Strategic Plan

The National Office collected the discussions held over the past two years into the first draft of a *Strategic Plan for the ASPIRA Association: 1998-2003*. The Plan, which is a Guide for the ASPIRA Association, sets forth the general framework for the Association's development over the next five years. It covers the basic principles of the Association, its mission and goals, and sets forth general direction and strategies for the next five years in the areas of programs, advocacy, development and management. It includes major initiatives in: developing entrepreneurship, promoting ASPIRA schools, communications, fund-raising and management, in addition to strategies to strengthen and expand existing programs and advocacy efforts.

Once approved by the Executive Committee of the National Board, the draft will be sent to all the Associates for further refinement in Association-wide discussions. Based on the input, it will be revised and submitted for final approval to the National Board at its February meeting.

We are especially pleased because this is the first time that the ASPIRA Association develops a strategic plan for the Association as a whole.

National Board of Directors

As indicated, the By-Laws of the Association were finalized, collecting the all the amendments approved by the National Board in its last meeting, as well as those that had been approved in the years prior, but had not been included in the actual document. The Article of Association were also updated based on amendments approved by the Board of Directors. These will be distributed widely among the Associates.

A significant part of the grant requested from the Ford Foundation is for development of the National and local Boards of Directors. This will include developing manuals and training of board members across the Association in all areas of board responsibility.

We continue to produce the *Memo to the Board*, though because of the conference only one issue was produced during this period.

Administration/Finance

The National Office was restructured to provide a more effective delivery of services to Associates, additional follow-up on programs, enhance fund-raising and streamline procedures. John Villamil was appointed Executive Vice President and is now overseeing all national programs. Mr. Villamil, formerly at Dade County Community College in Florida and former Academic Dean in Puerto Rico, has over 20 years experience in program administration in education as is a nationally known expert in educational technology. He is also a proven fund-raiser. Mr. Villamil is now

responsible for all national programs and education and technology initiatives at the National Office.

The former director of the Education and Government Relations, Ms. Hilda Crespo, was appointed Vice President for Policy and Government Affairs. Ms. Crespo is charged with policy, government affairs and all ASPIRA National Office collaborations. Both the finance office and the development coordinators continue to report to the President.

The annual audit conducted by Arthur Anderson was completed. As the report shows, ASPIRA received a "clean" audit.

The National Office computer network is now fully operational internally. Our next step is to secure access to a T-1 line in the building for speedy Internet access and to develop ASPIRA's Intranet. IBM donated two high power lap-top computers to the National Office. We will be requesting funding from the IBM Foundation to develop the Intranet and our Web Site.

The endowment fund, while it lost some during the recent downturn on Wall Street, is up to almost \$1 million again.

ASPIRA's Administrative Manual is under review. Recommendations have been completed regarding procedures, salary scales, staff performance assessment (which is currently very cumbersome) and others. The revisions will be discussed with the National Board at the next meeting in February.

The National Office continues to provide technical assistance to the Associates in Management and Accounting. In January, site visits will be made to Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois to provide assistance on their accounting system.

Hilda's new position